

# Every Child Learning Every Day



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## READY TO LEARN

### Books mark summer fun

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Summer brings an amazing transformation in nature; mostly by plants, insects, and animals, but people have some influence too. Several of these books have clues to how these changes happen.

#### "Buzz-Buzz, Busy Bees:

An Animal Sounds Book," by Dawn Bentley and illustrated by Heather Cahoon, 2004, Little Simon. Busy bee has no time to play or visit with the farmyard animals, but why? This keen little book will hold your curiosity all the way to the surprise ending.

"Growing Vegetable Soup," by Lois Ehlert, 1987/2004, Harcourt. A board book just in time for summer growing and fall harvesting of vegetables for a great pot of soup. Combine this book with helping hands to make the soup and the chances are high that it may be their best soup yet.

"The Daddy Mountain," by Jules Feiffer, 2004, Hyperion. Dads are amazing and they also are very tall compared to a small child. One of the great challenges for youngsters is climbing from the ground to his shoulders.

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Dr. Stan Steiner teaches Children's Literature at Boise State University.



## Make time for summer reading

### Dear Reader:

One of the most important things parents can do is read to their children.

Summer is a perfect time to encourage reading. Children don't have homework, and they'll have lots of time.

Taking time to read and talk to children about what they are reading makes it clear that reading is a special activity.

Sharing stories and favorite books together is a great way to connect with your child and to pass on family values.

Reading and talking about favorite stories is a good starting point for talking about your own family's history and the things you did or read when you were young, or the traditions and values that



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really matter to your family.

In addition to strengthening family ties, reading together helps build strong

readers. Research shows that students who spend more time reading for recreation score higher on comprehension tests, make better grades, and develop more sophisticated writing styles.

Regular reading doesn't have to be hours a day, either. As little as fifteen minutes a day, when practiced on a consistent basis, can significantly increase reading ability.

I hope you'll spend your summer reading some great stories with the children in your life and as a result help foster a life-long love of learning.

*Marilyn Howard*

## READY TO LEARN

### Food cards can build reading skills

Planning meals and shopping trips are great times to work on new reading and writing skills with your preschool child.

A fun project to help children in planning meals and shopping trip are "food cards."

Save empty food packages such as cereal boxes.

What to do: Working with your child, cut out pictures from cereal boxes or other items purchased frequently, or from newspaper or magazines.

Working with your child, glue the pictures on an index card, then sit with your child and print the name of the item under the picture. If your child wants to "print" under the label you write, that's great. Scribbles, one or two letters are all fine.



Using the food cards, you and the child can plan meals and shopping lists. When you

have some time, perhaps on a weekend or day off of work, sit down with your child and plan a menu for the week and a trip to the grocery store.

Talk about what foods you will plan to eat and what foods will need to be purchased at the store.

If you have a child's picture-word cookbook, let her plan a snack or meal item.

Draw the child's attention to the initial letters of each word (milk has an "m" sound), the number of words for each item

(spaghetti with sauce is three words) and provide verbal clues that help to identify a word (it's yellow).

Encourage discussion about how the particular menu items are made or where they come from, the child's likes and dislikes, as well as categorizing items.

Use your picture cards for the items that your child knows. Post a copy of your menu on the refrigerator low enough for your child to see. You and your child can both write your "list" for the store.

Again, anything goes for your child's "writing." If you can take your child with you shopping, all the better.

The child can use the picture cards to locate an item in the store with you.



## RESOURCES

### Keep kids busy during time off

From [www.earlychildhood.com](http://www.earlychildhood.com)

Sleeping late. Hours of uninterrupted play. Lazy summer afternoons. Glasses of ice cold lemonade. It's that special time of year known as "summer vacation."

This summer, before the kids complain of "nothing to do" or spending hours glued to the "flickering blue tube" plan some fun activities to help encourage learning through play throughout the summer.

Below are some free or inexpensive ideas that focus on language arts, math, science, art, social studies -- that can help make this a special summer.

**Mud pies and beet juice.** Mud and children go together. Collect several small molds or jar lids. Mix mud and water into a paste for "pies." Top with beet juice thickened with flour for a beautiful pink frosting.

**Play store.** Save discarded food containers and boxes for a "play store" under the trees.

**Water paint.** Using large paintbrushes (discarded) and a bucket of water, encourage water painting on sidewalks.

**Rock collection.** One of the interesting things about rocks is the vast variety. Plan for safe-keeping and organization. Search for different ones if you travel.

**Insect count.** Keep a tally of the number and variety of insects observed in a given day. Or, place a hoola-hoop on the ground. Count the number of insects found. (Purchase an insect guide.)

**Triangle, circles, rectangles and squares.** Watch for these shapes as you drive along. Keep a tally of the number found.

**Hidden letters.** Watch for ABC's in nature, objects, and buildings. Example: (T) telephone poles, (O) end of a large pipe, (A) swing set.

## NUTRITION

### Make family activity a summer goal

When the weather is warm, play outside together. You don't need to spend money to fit active fun into your family life.

Try to be active every day.

Below are some suggested activities.

- Play hopscotch. Draw a hopscotch game on the sidewalk.
- Create a parade. Dress up



everyone, including the pets. Decorate wagons, tricycles, bikes and strollers.

- Visit a farmer's market. Walk and talk about the foods. Buy something to prepare and eat at home.

- Run through the garden sprinkler.

- Go fruit picking: berries, peaches, apples, whatever grows where you live.

- Splash: in a pool, lake, or slow stream.

- Walk to the store or library-- even if it takes longer.

- Play games that move: "Ring around the Rosie", "London Bridge," others.

Try this warm-weather snack:  
2 cups hulled (stems removed) and halved strawberries

1 cup orange juice

4-7 oz. paper cups

4 popsticks or plastic spoon

Place fruit and juice in a blender. Whirl until smooth.

Pour into four 7 oz. Paper cups and freeze until partially frozen.

Place pop sticks or plastic spoons in center of cups. Freeze until firm. The pop served with 1/2

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### Car games can help build kids' math skills

If you will be spending some time traveling this summer in the car with small children, here are some simple activities to build math skills from the U.S. Department of Education.

- Little children can learn the names of different shapes. Traffic signs are a good place to start. Yield signs are triangles, highway signs are rectangles, and stop signs are octagons. Ask children about the signs they see. Older children may talk a lot about what they saw. But for younger children, you may



be doing most of the talking, "That sign is yellow. It is shaped like a triangle."

- Think of a number between 1 and 10. Give your children clues like more or less and ask them to guess the number.

- Ask children to look for numbers in the environment, like the numbers on street signs or storefronts. Talk about the different things people use numbers for--like finding things, naming things, or giving out other information like prices.

- Play license plate games. Read aloud the numbers on license plates; find a license plate with the number two; or look for license plates with your child's age on them.

## INFORMATION

### New children's book highlights Idaho's famous taters

Mill Park Publishing of McCall announces the publication of a fun and educational book for Idaho children, parents, teachers and caregivers.

"The Magic Potato - La Papa Mágica is a story and coloring book written in English and Spanish.

The read-out-loud story describes the adventures of children who ride around Idaho on a magic, flying potato named Russet.

The 20-page book includes original illustrations for children to color. The text includes days of the week, numbers, colors and key words in both

languages.

Closing the achievement gap for limited English and Hispanic children is a state-wide priority as the Hispanic population continues to grow. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the Hispanic population increased nearly 20 percent in certain areas of Idaho from 2000 to 2002.



Mill Park also publishes the "The Idaho Color, Fun & Fact Book." Half of the book features Idaho pioneers, puzzles and potatoes. Children can help Lewis and Clark find their way West or guide the pioneers on the Oregon Trail. The book includes a recipe for mashed potatoes and an Idaho word search game. Children can color Idaho's official bird, fish, flower, flag and horse.

The other half of the book includes characters from the award-winning children's book "Gators & Taters: A Week of Bedtime Stories."